

PRESS RELEASE

Helga Griffiths: Spacetime Warp

Berlin, September 29th – November 11th, 2006

New works of the artist Helga Griffiths are being shown on the occasion of the opening of the new gallery space of Dieter Reitz.

In recent years, Helga Griffiths has made a name for herself with futuristic multi-sense installations at international biennials and triennials (Havana Biennial Echigo-Tsumari-Art Triennial in Japan). Her works have been shown in museums like the New Museum in the ZKM, Karlsruhe, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo and the Leopold-Hoesch-Museum in Düren at the International Paper Biennial as well as the Omni Art Project in Miami, a satellite project of the Art Basel Miami. In December, Griffiths will take part in the 10th Cairo Biennial as an international guest artist. In this exhibition – her first in Berlin – she is showing some older works, like lead castings of childrens' dresses, as well as several works created especially for this show.

In her latest show, she is concentrating on the fourth dimension – Einstein's laws of special and general relativity, which supply the title Spacetime Warp. An extract from Einstein's text on the theory of relativity is translated into Morse code and displayed as running LED text.

The scientific data of an actual thunderstorm, which occurred in Darmstadt in 2005, are converted into a flashing LED code. Space, time and light require a changed, multidimensional perception of a natural phenomenon.

The video installation "Spacetime Traveller" shows a girl on a trampoline. The forwards and backwards movements of the athlete overlap until – at the climax – both bodies fuse together in the middle of the somersault. The movement is frozen for a moment. An altered perception is evoked of time and body, as well as gravity.

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For the scent edition “Space Souvenirs”, planetary smells have been developed on the basics of the chemical and physical composition of their atmospheres and climates. These samples, brought back from an imaginary expedition into space in the nineteenth century are in fact, free associations and memories of the artist’s own imaginary travels. The dry, volcanic desert smell of Mars is set against the atmospherically light, immaterial lightning and wind smell of Venus or the cold snow and ice smell of Saturn. Through the close relationship between smell and memory, these scents evoke individual time travel experience for each recipient.

The brain of the artist is presented as a polished metal surface derived from actual tomographic data, as a mirror of the environment. The body, in this case, the artist’s own brain, becomes the location of the perception. In contrast, a black sphere swallows the light energy of several blue LED lamps installed in glass tubes arranged in a star-like shape. A video of planetary impressions (another imaginary space journey) is projected onto three rotating abstract curved surfaces and reflected back in fragments. The view into space is simultaneously a view into the future, but reminds us of the past – the “big bang” and the origin of the universe. The visitor is confronted by new perspectives – not only in the perception of time and space, but also in the handling of existential subjects like the end of the solar system and finally the future of our living space, the Earth.